

FAST FORWARD (speech 1 – Icebreaker)

INTRO

You know, several weeks ago, I called up Dan Benig over the phone and I said “Dan, I used to be with the toastmasters club and I’d like to rejoin. How do I do that?” At the other end, Dan said “Oh really? That’s no problem. Just go on attend the next session. Ask MicMic when the next session will be. And by the way, be ready with your Icebreaker speech.” And that’s why I’m here today.

But two years ago, I was already a defacto member of this club and after only 3 or 4 sessions, I left. So today, I’ll talk about why I left and why I’m coming back.

PAST

Two years ago, in 2003. This toastmaster club was launched, and if I’m not mistaken it was Alfie who was voted president. We had outside guest toastmasters who shared their speeches and it was nice. At that time the club started at 5:30 and usually, usually ended at 7:00. One time it ended at 7:30. Another time it ended at 8:00 in the evening.

Now at that time, I had 3 school-aged kids who had challenges in their academic performance. At home, I was the self-proclaimed, self-designated tutor for the kids and believe me, most of my evenings were spent on helping with schoolwork. On top of this, I was taking piano lessons at that time. I had a wonderful teacher who was giving these lessons and her name was Tracy. She was very good. She was young, energetic, full of enthusiasm, a very nice person, fun to be with. In other words, we had a wonderful relationship. And no, it’s not the kind of relationship you’re thinking. Nah, nah. We had a wonderful teacher-student relationship.

So between toastmaster’s and all these activities, which would I rather choose? I mean seriously, would I rather stay and hang around until 7:30 or 8 in the evening when I could be somewhere else? Priorities and scheduling forced me to quit toastmasters then in 2003.

PRESENT

Fast forward to the present. Year 2005. My piano teacher had to leave. As you know, piano teaching is not exactly a very lucrative job in this country. She went abroad to the proverbial “greener pastures” in Brunei also to teach music. I felt sad but at the same time happy for her. My kids are a little more independent now after cultivating better study habits. Now I felt that I have more free time.

Early this year, I attended a train-the-trainer seminar for SME’s. You see, I was starting to become a trainer so I thought it was a nice opportunity to attend. We had an outside consultant by the name of Rodgie Duerme. Those of you who have attended this training probably know her. She’s good at her craft, in speaking and in presentation skills. And you know what?, I was fascinated by her and by the whole training content that I took the training seriously. Yes, seriously. As a new trainer, I thought to myself I could do that and it’ll be great if I could do that. We did our own solo mock presentations in the class and I thought I did very well and I got a nice grade.

It is then that I realized that to be good at something, like in this case presenting or public speaking, you just have to jump in and do it. Just do it. The training class itself probably jump-started me into speaking once again, but in the end, you just have to continue to seek these opportunities to speak in front of an audience.

Who among us here know how to swim? Can I see a show of hands? Come on, don’t be shy. (if nobody can swim, say “Gee, I’d hate to be in the same boat with you guys”) When you were just starting to learn to swim, what did you feel? Struggle, yes? Arms flailing, gasping for air, struggling for dear life to raise your head above water. But you know, that after learning the stroke mechanics, you just have to continuously immerse yourself in the water... to be comfortable with the water. Yes? Well, same thing with speaking, after learning the mechanics, you just have to immerse yourself in speeches in front of an audience and continuously seek these opportunities. And it is this analogy that triggered in me this new-found desire to rejoin toastmasters.

FUTURE

Fast forward to the future. What does the future hold? Well, for me, I’d like to be a better speaker someday. A speaker who, more than anything else, can capture and inspire the audience like my dad when he was still a college professor.

Now, I may not have the charisma of a Brother Mike or a Brother Eddie or a Brother Ely, but that’s okay. With the civil cases two of them are facing now, I don’t wanna be like them anyway. So how to be a better speaker? Seek opportunities to speak. Like so many things in life, public speaking is all hands-on.

CONCLUSION

As Aristotle once said, “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.” Let me repeat that “What we have to learn to do, we learn by doing.”

In other words,

The Learning is in the Doing.

The Taking is in the Giving.

You Use it, or you Lose it.

Good Afternoon, OSPI toastmasters.